

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

SARC Respectful Relationships

Ph: 1800 199 888
respectfulrelationships.org.au



*It's about respecting yourself
and respecting that others may be
different from you.*

Even though everyone is different and everyone views the world differently, all relationships should be respectful.

People have many different types of relationships in their lives – with family, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends – but all respectful relationships include characteristics like:

- *respect*
- *communication*
- *trust*
- *equality*

Types of relationships

Relationships include those with family, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, people you work with, people you play sport with, your parents friends...

Relationships can be between people from different countries, different cultures, the opposite sex or the same sex. They can be very close and intimate or not so close and more like acquaintances. They can be long term and last a lifetime, or they can be quite short term.

Basically relationships come in all shapes and sizes, and to know what relationships are

right for you, you first need to know yourself and what your limits are.

Knowing yourself and your limits

Once we begin to know ourselves we are in a better position to have healthy and respectful relationships. Knowing what we want also helps us think and communicate more clearly.

There are so many things that make you YOU, like your values, culture, beliefs, relationships, experiences, spirituality, thoughts and feelings. Have a think about what the important things are in your life, what you feel strongly about, what are your dreams and

aspirations, and what makes you unique.

Having healthy relationships also relies on you knowing your own limits. Limits are physical, emotional, spiritual or sexual boundaries that you don't want to cross. Knowing your limits can help you make the right decisions for you and also keep you safer.

Remember we are not all the same, so what's important to you and where you set your limits may not be the same as someone else. It's about respecting yourself and respecting that others may be different from you.

It's all about good communication

Communication in relationships is really important. It's a two way thing – talking and listening.

Talking in relationships is part of keeping relationships healthy and positive, even though it's not always easy and there are things you would rather not talk about.

Respect is about...

...feeling safe ...making your own choices ...understanding that others have a right to be respected and feel safe ...trust and honesty ...being free and confident to be yourself ...being able to say no, or change your mind ...being able to say what you are thinking and feeling without being put down, criticised or hurt...listening and being heard...compromising and communicating ...being able to disagree and have your own opinion...compromising and communicating ...being able to make a mistake

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When there is conflict it is important that you deal with it in a respectful way.

If you're having problems in your relationships there may be conflict and disagreements. Keep arguments respectful and fair – no violence, no put downs, and you both have to talk and listen to each other. If you talk about it you may be able to learn from the argument and stop it from happening again. It is also important to recognise and own things that you might have done that led to the disagreement. More often than not an argument results from a simple misunderstanding so talking about it can sometimes quite easily fix it.

If talking with the person doesn't work, and they cannot understand and respect your point of view, then you may have to remove yourself from the situation and maybe even them. Remember you need to show yourself respect too.

What about respect in romantic relationships?

Respect in romantic relationships includes all the things that are important in all relationships, but there are some important extras that need to be considered. See the Respect & romance Fact Sheet for more info on this.

Some tips to help you talk about the tough things...remember to let the other person finish talking, make sure you've understood what they're saying, and sometimes it may even be worth repeating it back to them. The real key to good communication is listening, so make sure you're not doing all the talking.

It's good to talk about things that happen in a relationship that upset you, and it's even more important to do this as they happen and not save them up for a big list of 'I don't likes...' to bombard the person with.

And think about how you're saying things. Try to say things in a way that doesn't blame the other person, or put them down, and definitely don't yell or raise your voice at the other person. These things will just make the other person stop listening and you won't get anywhere.

What happens when there is conflict?

There are ups and downs in all relationships, even those that don't involve romance. The downs may make you feel anything from upset, to confused, to guilty, to angry. When there is conflict it is important that you deal with it in a respectful way.

If you are not happy with something that someone has done or if you feel you are being treated disrespectfully, you need to talk to that person in a non-blaming way, and let them know how you feel and how you expect to be treated. Take the time to listen to the other person and hear their point of view. Some things that happen are hard to talk about, but it is still important to talk things through.

If you like this Fact Sheet and want to know more, check out our other Fact Sheets:

- Respect & romance
- Respect & consent
- Respect & sexting
- Respect & dating
- Respect & online chatting
- Respect & sex